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Work and Workers

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION of the Religious Education Association is to be held at Rochester, N. Y., February 5-7, 1907. A strong programme will be presented on **the** general theme "The Materials of Religious Education." The year 1906 has been one of noteworthy progress for the Association. It has established a bi-monthly journal, entitled *Religious Education*, which is edited with ability and fills a place not precisely occupied by any other periodical. It has held numerous local conferences, and has presented its purposes at over one hundred summer assemblies and similar gatherings. It has established an exhibit and reference library at its office. New guilds have been organized. The membership has been greatly strengthened, and the financial situation is in all respects encouraging.

REPORTS recently received from theological schools in the United States, including all the leading schools for graduate students, but excluding in general those of lower grade, yield the following interesting statistics:

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| New students entering autumn, 1906 | 1196 |
| New students entering autumn, 1905 | 1158 |
| Total registration, autumn, 1906 | 2949 |
| Total registration, 1905-6 | 3029 |
| Average total registration for ten years | 3049 |
| Total registration in 1889-90 | 3036 |

These figures seem to indicate that in the seventeen years since 1889-90 there has been no appreciable increase in the number of students attending the higher grade of theological schools. They might be somewhat changed by including the schools not in existence in 1889-90, and allowing for the growth of some of the smaller schools not included in the above statement. At best, however, the number has remained practically stationary, with some fluctuation from year to year, and gains in some schools offset by losses in others. The experience of different denominations has been very unequal. Among the Methodists and Episcopalians there has been a notable gain in this period, offsetting losses in some other denominations.

Die Christliche Welt for October, 1906, states that the number of students of evangelical theology in Germany has diminished from 4,581 in the winter semester of 1887-88 to 2,136 in the winter semester of 1904-5. In other words, in the seventeen years in which the population of the German Empire has increased by ten millions the number of students for the ministry has diminished over 50 per cent.

THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY continues this year its "Extension Courses for Lay Students," under the direction of Professor Richard Morse Hodge, D.D. It offers a long list of courses at the seminary and at other points in the city of New York. The enrolment in these courses in the last five years has amounted to more than two thousand persons, most of them Sunday-school teachers from the churches of New York City. The example of Union Seminary ought to be followed by seminaries and universities in other cities.

It is a significant testimony to the rising tide of determination to improve the Sunday school religiously by improving it intellectually, and to the enlistment in this effort of a high order of talent, that a number of Sunday schools have of late reorganized their work by grading the school and putting all the pupils of each grade in charge of a thoroughly competent teacher, to whom is committed the whole responsibility of instruction without "quarterlies" or other textbook save the Bible. The University Congregational Church of Chicago has recently adopted such a plan as this, under conditions which will make the results achieved well worth observing. The First Congregational Church of Columbus, O., of which Dr. Washington Gladden is pastor, has recently reorganized its educational work under the leadership of Rev. Charles C. Kelso, superintendent of the Sunday school. A course on "How the Bible Grew," conducted by Mr. Kelso, with a view to providing the school with teachers who have at least a general knowledge of the whole Bible, is attracting to the school many who have hitherto had no relation to it, and the outcome promises to be a great improvement in the teaching force of the Sunday school. Among other schools that are making notable progress through the organization of their own forces may be mentioned those of the First Presbyterian Church of Austin, Chicago; the Baptist Church of Oak Park, Ill.; the Second Congregational Church of Rockford, Ill. In each of these cases the movement, which has resulted in a marked increase of interest and improvement in the work, has begun with one person who had conceived a higher ideal of what a Sunday school should be and become ambitious to see this ideal realized. What is true in these schools is doubtless true in scores of others, and might be in hundreds.

AN advanced course of study in early Old Testament history as far as Samuel is being issued by the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society. The authors are Professor I. F. Wood, of Smith College, and Rev. Newton M. Hall, of Springfield, Mass. This course is offered as an optional substitute for the International Lessons for 1907, which traverse

the same biblical ground. The new course is notable as presenting fully and clearly the historical interpretation of the Old Testament which leading scholars now approve. It is gratifying that the material available for good Sunday-school instruction increases rapidly now.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS is making encouraging progress in the issue of its "Constructive Bible Studies." Two volumes have been issued since October 1: Gilbert, *A Short History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, a textbook for pupils of high-school age, and Gates, *A Life of Christ*, for pupils in the fifth and sixth grades. Two volumes are in the press: Miss Chamberlin and Mrs. Kern, *Child Religion in Song and Story*, for teachers of pupils of the first, second, and third grades, with an accompanying book in outline for the pupils; and Waring, *Christianity and Its Bible*, a book for adult classes. Two others are nearly ready for the press: Willett, *The Book of Samuel*, and Burgess, a revision of Burton and Mathews, *Life of Christ*, to adapt it more perfectly to high-school pupils. Several others are in a less advanced stage of preparation.

THE tendency which is gradually transforming the Sunday school from a Bible school strictly so called into an agency for all-round religious education, especially of the young, has manifested itself in the last year in a notable emphasis upon the study of missions in the Sunday school. This has appeared in various ways. The *Biblical World* has published two articles on the subject, and the American Baptist Missionary Union has issued a volume by Miss Hixson, entitled *Missions in the Sunday School*. Text-books for such study have been published by the Presbyterian Board of Missions, and perhaps by others. At Silver Bay, Lake George, N. Y., July 17-19, 1906, there was held a conference of leading Sunday-school and missionary officials and workers for the discussion of the needs of missionary instruction in Sunday schools. Eighty-four persons were present, representing seventeen religious denominations and various religious organizations, including the Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association. The conference has issued a statement of its views, of which the following is a part:

Missionary instruction is an essential part of religious education, and should be included in the curriculum of every Sunday school: by the missionary treatment of such lessons of the International or other series as are clearly missionary in spirit or content; the frequent use of missionary illustrations in Sunday-school instruction; the use of supplemental graded or ungraded missionary lessons; the regular or occasional use of carefully planned missionary programmes as closing exercises for the schools; the organization of mission study classes to meet special needs in the various departments of the school.

A missionary atmosphere should be created in the Sunday school through its worship: by the occasional selection for the opening exercises of passages of Scripture bearing directly upon missions; by missionary petitions in public prayer; by the use of missionary psalms and hymns; by the cultivation among the pupils of habits of systematic, proportionate, and individual giving to missionary objects.

The International Sunday-School Lesson Committee should be urged hereafter to provide as many lessons with definite missionary content as can conveniently be done. The providing of a number of such lessons for use in the near future is noted with satisfaction.

Missionary instruction in theological seminaries should be broadened so as to include the study of missions and methods in the Sunday school.

It is to be hoped that editors of Sunday-school lessons and textbooks will remain true to the recommendation of the conference that the passages of Scripture selected for missionary treatment be such as are "clearly missionary in spirit or content." It would be a misfortune, both from the missionary and the biblical point of view, if the legitimate desire to introduce missionary instruction into the Sunday schools should lead to a warping of Scripture for that purpose.

MR. CLAYTON S. COOPER, Bible-Study Secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, reports the following facts respecting the study of the Bible in universities and colleges, in the year 1905-6: 560 institutions reported 33,157 men in Bible classes, as against 25,260 in 528 institutions in 1904-5; 112 normal training classes for student leaders were reported in 99 institutions; these classes were taught by college presidents, deans, professors, clergymen, and general secretaries; 2,837 fraternity men were enrolled in the Bible classes in 103 institutions, as against 1,909 men in 53 institutions the previous year. The officers of the Association will give special attention the coming year to the promotion of Bible study in professional schools, and in high schools. In both these fields the outlook is very encouraging.

THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION reports the following facts respecting the study of the Bible among the women students of the country: In the school year 1905-6 Bible study was carried on under the Association by 19,161 students in 599 classes in 390 colleges.

In addition to the work of the two Christian Associations, an increasing number of colleges offer instruction on the Bible in the curriculum by members of the faculty. Accurate statistics on this matter are difficult to obtain; but such facts as are accessible indicate that not less than 225

colleges are offering such courses, and that some 16,000 students are availing themselves of them.

THE reports of the American Institute of Sacred Literature published in recent issues of the *Biblical World* show not only an increased activity on the part of the Institute, but encouraging progress in biblical study. The Institute lecturers upon biblical subjects have their time completely filled with engagements. Ministers to the number of fifteen hundred have co-operated with the Institute in promoting Bible study in their churches. More than four thousand persons are carrying on definite courses of study with the Institute. The largest of the classes, numbering over one hundred, is in Philadelphia, the most remote in Egypt. In addition to these, there have been reported 129 classes formed as a result of its campaign, but taking the courses under denominational or other auspices. Perhaps the most significant element is the apparent growth of the feeling of responsibility for the educational work of the church seen through correspondence with ministers. An effort to secure "evangelization through education" is noted in an ever-increasing degree.

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE of the Methodist Episcopal church conducts courses in the Bible, personal evangelism, Christian life and experience, missions, and Christian stewardship, besides a comprehensive course of study for the Junior League. During the year 1906 there has been a marked increase of interest and enthusiasm in the educational work. A correspondence course for Junior League superintendents and their helpers has met with most gratifying success. To meet the demand for more efficient leadership, an institute was held in the summer, under the management of the general secretary, on the Des Plaines camp ground. The success was such that three or four such institutes will be held in different sections of the country during the summer of 1907.

THE BAPTIST YOUNG PEOPLE'S UNION OF AMERICA conducts educational work in three subjects—Bible reading, sacred literature, and missions; and in three departments—the Junior, Senior, and Advanced. One hundred thousand students followed one or more of these courses during the past year. A notable feature of the work is that young people have been influenced through these studies to enter upon a college course in some of our schools of learning. From one small society ten young people were led to enter the university in the course of four years through the influence of these studies.

THERE are many indications that the foreign missionary work of the Christian church is rapidly passing into a new stage of development, in

which education is to fill a much larger place than formerly. Twenty years ago there was a strong sentiment among missionaries and officials of missionary organizations in favor of evangelization as the chief, if not the sole, duty of the Christian church to the non-Christian peoples and educational work, though actively carried on, was in a measure on the defensive. Today, if we mistake not, the dominant sentiment is that expressed by Dr. Dennis in his recently issued volume on *Missions and Social Progress*, that "the mission school is the cheapest and most effective method of reaching the life of the non-Christian community for the purpose of evangelizing it." Of all lands in which missionary work is going forward none is in a more interesting or critical condition at this hour than China. With marvelous rapidity China is freeing itself from the shackles of centuries, and opening her doors and windows to the influence of modern ideas as developed in other lands. What Japan did a few years ago, China is now doing in a yet more wonderful way. In this situation it is recognized by practically all intelligent observers that the problem of Christian missions is pre-eminently an educational one. Instead of a thousand men on horseback going through China and giving an average of ten minutes to each man and woman and child—substantially the plan advocated by a most distinguished missionary to China a few years ago—it is generally recognized that what China calls for today is schools and teachers. Nor is it simply elementary schools, or schools for the education of the children of Christians, but colleges and professional schools and even universities, that China needs today. It is an interesting fact in this connection that the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions has just sent to China a commission consisting of four men to make a study of the whole situation, and that the American Baptist Missionary Union is about to send a similar commission with similar purpose. The Christian church confronts today in China and Japan, especially in China, a situation which for significance and critical importance has scarcely been surpassed perhaps not equalled since the foundation of our great missionary societies a century ago. And the appeal which this situation makes in the name of world-statesmanship and humanity and religion is pre-eminently to Christian educators.